

OPEN Arms

APRIL 2000 * Vol 12 Number 5

P.O. Box 845 Mishawaka, IN 46546



PLEASE ATTEND: APRIL 15, 1:00P

Open Arms will be hosting a networking meeting to discuss various ways to best reach out to our community.

Our Readers Write In:

"Just a quick note to praise you for your good work! My partner and I both enjoy reading the newsletter. Our crazy work schedules make it difficult to do much together but it is reassuring to read what is out there. Personally I would like to see more input from the readers, have you tried soliciting responses from the women? I enjoy the softball and women's festival stories so much and feel that other events should be covered as well. Perhaps women's experiences with the different events like dinners out and potlucks would entice others to become more involved and may eventually nudge some of us "old fogies" into the community where we could share our vast experiences. V.W.

Hi, have the baseball....softball announcements for try-outs come across your desk yet? Will there be lots of info. like last year for those of us not so familiar with South Bend and who haven't played in years and are thinking about getting involved in something that might injure ourselves and get more sympathy from our girlfriends????

What about a summer program director, like what Sherrill and Lori did with canoe trips ect.? Can several people share this enlightening responsibility? I'm ready for a BBQ!!!!!!
thanks,
Barb

This is your newsletter..... We challenge you to help make this a newsletter that everyone in our community looks forward to receiving. We ask that you to attend this meeting and help us to create ways to entice our sisters to become more involved in our community.

We will be meeting at the new Denny's Restaurant (just north of the toll road) at 1 PM for lunch and discussion. Please RSVP to one of the following telephone numbers no later than April 14th. 219-271-0338 or 219-246-1195 Thanks.

IT'S A GIRL!!!



Laura and Nancy are proud to announce the arrival of their daughter; Victoria Louise JinGe Neff-Aldrich. Adopted from China on Feb. 14, 2000.

She is our little sweetheart.

Sherry K. will be playing this month at:



Media Play, Mishawaka, IN,
Saturday, April 15, 7:00 pm.
Barnes & Noble, Kalamazoo, MICH.
Saturday, April 22, 7:00 pm.

Three Cheers to Hilary Swank for her award winning (OSCAR) performance as Brandon Teena in "Boys Don't Cry". The film recounts the story of Brandon's murder seven years ago in Falls City, Neb. This film gives us an opportunity to learn more about transgendered individuals. According to the International Foundation for Gender Education, at least 12 gender-variant individuals were killed in 1999. Let's work together to end this madness.



Excerpted from The Rainbow Reader

The 72nd Academy Awards, "Best Picture" went to *American Beauty*, a portrait of dysfunctional suburbia where only a gay couple provide any sense of sanity. The picture, produced by Dan Jinks and Bruce Cohen, who are openly gay, also won a best actor award for Kevin Spacey.

WOMYN'S VARIETY SHOW

APRIL 29.....PEOPLE'S
CHURCH, KALAMAZOO
2 hours of live entertainment
and 3 hours of dance party



We have invited several groups from out of town and could use some help in providing "community housing" for 2 or more for the weekend. Please e-mail if you can provide housing. There will be a short questionnaire to fill out to best match womyn to households (smoking, pets, drinking, # of beds, ect). If you or anyone you know would like to be in the show, we still have a few time slots available. All must audition and make a Friday rehearsal. We also need a few "behind the scenes" womyn; stage hands, lights and amp, sound crew, props, makeup, stage mgr., and back-stage mgr. To advertise your group or business during the show, please e-mail...MAZEH@prodigy.net Need more info: call 616-324-8688

COMMUNITY EVENTS



April 15, 7:00 PM at Media Play in Mishawaka.....Sherry K.

April 22, 7:30 PM at Barnes & Nobel, in Kalamazoo, Mich.....Sherry K.

April 7, 7:30 PM.....Jamie Anderson, singer/songwriter appears at the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, 5310 Old Mill Road, Fort Wayne. The Pride Committee will have baked goods available to raise funds for the 3rd annual Pride Fest being held June 24 in Lawton Park. Tickets are \$10 on a sliding scale. For more information, call Candy Jacobs or Nancy Burgess at 219-424-3255

April 15MMCH.....FERRON performing songs from her new CD, "Inside Out"

Mountain Moving Coffee House for Womyn & Children, 1650 W. Foster, Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Andersonville, IL info: 312-409-0276

Coming on May 20th to MMCH.....25th Anniversary Celebration

April 20-24.... Line up for the 12th Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival: Sonia Rutstein of Disappear Fear, Sandy Rapp, Lee Hoffman, Shelley Graff, Lisa Cohen, Thursday Night Worker's Talent Show, and Sunday Night Camp Fire Sing-a-long, Children's Activities (boys age 8 and under welcome). Workshops, Day & Night Stage, Craft Market, Great Southern Meals (veg. & meat), RV/tent, Limited cabin spaces, **(No illegal drugs or alcohol, no s/m and no pets)**. \$95 to \$225 sliding scale, based on income.

For more info contact: Camp Sister Spirit, Box 12, Ovet, MS 39494 (601)344-1411 or sisterspir@aol.com

April 25.... 4 pm Chicago's African-American LesBiGayTrans Performance Ensemble, Walb Student Union, IU/Purdue, Fort Wayne
more info...219-744-1199

April 29.....Womyn's Variety Show & Dance.....Kalamazoo....Maze Productions 616-324-8688

April 29 & 30.....Millennium March on Washington for Equal Rights www.millenniummarch.com or www.ufmcc.com/millennium.htm

June 22-25.....National Women's Music Festival, Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Barnes & Noble's Gay & Lesbian Reading Group meets on the 4th Wednesday, 8:30 P.M. For info call 219-277-9482

CODEPENDENCE ANONYMOUS meetings will begin on Saturdays 9:30 AM at the Southside Christian Church. It is not Church Affiliated. We are just using the church as a meeting place. For more info call Lynn at 259-6801

MICHIANA'S GAY YOUTH GROUP... for GLBT youth under 20 years of age, continues to offer to the youth community a positive and educational perspective on health issues, relationships with their families, coming out issues and history of the community. The support group will continue with the same (IYG) guidelines that have been used over the past eight years in a peer group setting. For more information call 219-235-9396 All calls are confidential.

THE TREVOR HOTLINE National toll-free suicide hotline for gay and questioning youth. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Teens can call 1-800-850-8078, where they can talk to trained counselors. Visit www.trevorproject.com

THE LGBT SWITCHBOARD is a non-profit organization that provides assistance and/or referral to the LGBT community in Bloomington, IN as well as surrounding areas. The phone line is answered daily between 6 PM-12AM by professionally trained volunteers who direct callers to various professionals &/or agencies for assistance. 812-336-7660 or 1-888-882-5428(LGBT)

THE SWITCHBOARD... takes calls every night from 7-11PM 317-251-7955 Callers can discuss issues such as coming out, transgender, marriage and other topics. All calls are confidential. Also on the at www.gayindy.org/switchboard/

GAY & LESBIAN HELPLINE/PEER LISTENING LINE The peer listening line is a nationwide toll free number staffed by GLBT youth who provide information, referrals, and support to callers Monday thru Friday 4PM-10PM EST 1-888-340-GLBT(4528). The gay & lesbian help line does the same work Monday - Friday 6PM-11PM, Sat. & Sun. 5PM-10PM EST 1-800-399-PEER (7337)

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN (NOW) Meetings are open to the public and will be the 4th Wed. from 7 - 9PM of each month, Lower Level...St. Joseph County Public Library, 304 S. Main, S. Bend, more info: Penny 291-2342, Rhoda 288-7123

KALAMAZOO GAY/LESBIAN RESOURCE CENTER, C.A.R.E.S Building, Lower Level
629 Pioneer Street, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49001 voice mail: (616) 349-4234

LESBIAN GROWTH & SUPPORT GROUP Fort Wayne Woman's Bureau at 3521 Lake Ave. Suite 1, Info....219-424-7977

Also in Fort Wayne...**G/L/B/I/T Help line** 219-744-1199 available Mon.-Thurs., 7-10 PM, Fri.-Sat, 7-Midnight, Sun, 8-9 PM

FORT WAYNE IYG..... a support group for GLBT youth under 21 years of age Information: 219-422-7597

BLOOMINGTON OUTREACH, informal support group for lesbian & bisexual women 812-855-3849

NORTH/CENTRAL ALLIANCE Located in the Kokomo, Tipton, Logansport, Marion and Frankfort area of North/Central Indiana....North/Central Alliance, P.O. Box 186, Kokomo, IN. 46903.. Voice Mail 317-454-8868

PFLAG (Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Meetings are from 2 to 4 PM the 4th Sunday of the month at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 17195 Cleveland Road, South Bend. Info....Nancy 219-277-2684, or write P.O. Box 4195, S. Bend, 46634

PFLAG in the St. Joseph/Berrien County area, group meetings take place the 3rd Wed. of each month. Info...call 616-429-2957

PFLAG in Fort Wayne meets every 2nd Monday at Plymouth Congregational Church, 501 W. Berry St, Info...Jackie, 219-486-2201

Weekly Event: The Sunday Lavender Morning Breakfast is in Kalamazoo, 9:30 AM Food, fun and conversation. Locations vary so please call for info: 616-324-8907 All womyn are invited to attend



The Amazon Trail by Lee Lynch

REAL BOYS DON'T DIE

In the early sixties I spent a lot of time, like most teens, trying to figure out who I was. My best resource was the library. The section where I found the most relevant information was Criminology.

New York, where I lived, considered me a juvenile delinquent because I was a gay kid. Never mind that I was well brought up, didn't skip school and or carry a switchblade like some of the non-gay girls.

Nevertheless, I was a young criminal and the studies of female "deviants" in prison were all I had of literature about myself. Often, their criminality was attributed to their variant natures. Occasionally they were granted a kind of forgiveness. After all, the women studied were in jail, without men, poor things, so they had to make do. I was suspicious of these studies -- if researchers studied women in prison then all the lesbians they studied would be, guess what? Criminals!

I admired these "bad" women. It never occurred to me that they might actually be criminals. They were gay; if they stole it was because they couldn't get decent jobs and if they assaulted it was because they couldn't control the circumstances of their lives.

Living happily ever after was not to be for them. Inside, they fell in love with and fought for straight women who might go back to men. I can't imagine why I was so proud and happy that I was queer like these women, or why reading about them gave me such a thrill. If I was sick, then it was an illness I treasured. If I had to survive in their world then I would -- and by my wits, not by my fists, although I was perfectly ready to use those if I had to. My brother, as if sensing the vulnerability of my difference, had taught me long before how to box.

Despite my queer attraction to these lesbians, I knew I'd never be quite like them. Sure, I could talk kind of tough, but I was better at keeping my mouth shut and getting teased about being the strong silent type.

Sure, I had to walk like I had no fear, but I'd never exactly mastered a girlish sashay in the first place. And of course I had to learn to drink, a talent for which my genes showed great promise.

Oh, and I was a criminal. I'd fallen in love with my best friend - that made me a menace to society, right?

Since the film "Boys Don't Cry" opened, several women I know have come back looking shell-shocked. I can't bear to see the movie, but I guess they got a bigger dose of reality than they'd paid for.

Brandon Teena may have been trans, or may have been a lesbian in drag, or may not have used those terms at all. However he identified, all that I've read and heard has taken me right back to my baby butch days. It's important that this film is out there because it apparently graphically demonstrates that nothing's really changed there are still women who are attracted to other women, act on it, and are punished by society one way or another, sometimes by vicious men like Teena's accused murderers.

I certainly had gender issues as a kid, but I didn't want to be a male. I found them foreign creatures, too large, too loud and so

(Continued on page 5)



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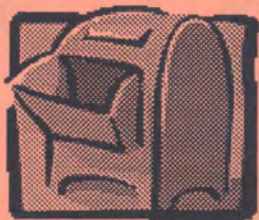
National women's music festival
June 22-25, 2000

Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana



Awards Banquet, Saturday, June 24
Marketplace featuring diversity and quality, with products such as jewelry, pottery, clothing, sculpture, drums, records, books, gems, toys and more
Women of Color solidarity luncheon
Drumming, workshops and jams
Round Robin, everyone shares their talents, hosted by Ginni Clemens
Golf Scramble, join 80 other festigoers on Friday, must pre register for this event
Guest Speakers: Chastity Bono, Linda Tillery, Lyn St. James
Mainstage Performers: Zoe Lewis & her Rubber Band, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Suzanne Westenhoefer, Cheryl Wheeler, Krissy Keefer, Linda Tillery & the Cultural Heritage Choir, Suede, Dar Williams, Toshi Reagon & the Big Lovely Band
Day Stage: Justina Golden, C.C Carter & Ronda Bedgood, SONiA, ori B., Giwayen Mata, Melanie DeMore
Comedy Concert: Susan Jeremy, Ann Lincoln, Lisa Koch
Mail to NWMF, P. O. Box 1427, Indianapolis, IN. 46206-1427; phone 317-927-9355, e-mail: wia@indy.net
visit the web page: <http://www.a1.com/wia> (that is the number 1, not the letter L)

The reason man's (sic) best friend is a dog is because he wags his tail instead of his tongue.



COURT OF FRIENDS

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Write out what you want other singles to know about you and what you are seeking in another.

Open Arms will run your ad for 2-3 months. You can resubmit or cancel at any time.

Open Arms reserves the right to edit for length and/or content any letters submitted for publication.

Send your ad to: The Court of Friends, P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, In. 46546 You will be assigned an ID number.

Your letter and ID number will be published in the next issue. To respond to a published single, enclose your reply in a **stamped, sealed envelope with the ID number written lightly in PENCIL on the front of the envelope.**

Place your reply into another envelope and mail it to The Court of Friends. We will then mail your reply to the corresponding single.

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OPEN ARMS MISSION STATEMENT

Open Arms exists to disseminate diverse information of interest to the Michiana lesbian community.

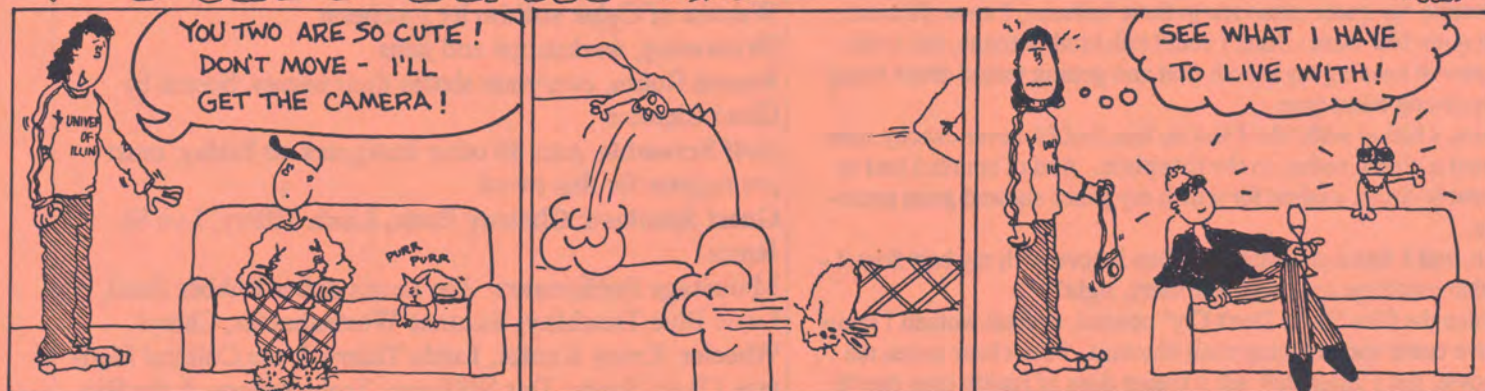
Open Arms is mailed monthly in a security envelope with a PO Box return address only.

Our mailing list is kept confidential and never shared with other publications or special interest groups.

Please send submissions to:
Open Arms, P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, IN. 46546
e-mail address mbdjkj@juno.com
e-mail address suze3@juno.com
Kaye & Marcia.....219-271-0338
Suze.....219-246-1195

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Lee Lynch (Continued from page 3)

arrogant. Why should they always get the last say, I remember thinking. And they did get the last say at least the last Teena ever heard.

When I came out some of us were really into drag or even into passing -- at age 14 and earlier. This wasn't the same as wanting to live as a man. For a little while each week or each day we felt strong in our boy clothes. We didn't get stared at when we put an arm around our girlfriends. We walked more freely in the world.

Somehow, my friends and I managed to stay out of major trouble -- and to stay alive. I remember lying on a bed fully clothed, a fascinating young woman beside me, when her boyfriend came upon us. He started physically bullying me. I was good at the squirm and run maneuver and managed to plunge into the thick of the ongoing party where he couldn't get at me. How many of us have had these close encounters?

It may now be legal for women to wear men's clothing and to make love with women, but it can still get one killed. If Teena had done male hormones and surgery he might be still be alive.

Who knows what will be standard forty years from Brandon Teena's death and after forty years of gender exploration. Maybe we're evolving toward blended genders. Or will kids, trans or gay, still be reading criminology texts to find themselves as victims?

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WELLNESS CORNER

By Susan Myers, R.N., LCSW, CHTP



ALWAYS HOPE

Always hope. A tiny seed has every reason to feel hopeless. It falls to the ground and cannot move anyplace else.

It gets trampled. It gets cold and wet. It gets buried.

And yet, in spite of all that, it does what it can. It sends out tiny, frail stems toward the warm sunlight.

It cannot move around to find food, so it takes what it has where it is, and makes optimum use of it.

It sends roots into the ground to anchor itself.

Growing just a little bit each day, it becomes a seedling and then a small tree.

The wind blows, the droughts come, the seasons change, and through it all the young tree perseveres.

It does what it can where it is. And in time, that adds up to quite an accomplishment.

It becomes a tall, sturdy, beautiful tree, producing more seeds which can eventually add up to an entire forest.

Though the tiny seed may appear hopeless and insignificant, it is not.

It does what it must, when it can, and manifests its grand possibilities.

When you are tempted to feel hopeless, think of the tiny seed.

It is far less capable, far less flexible, far less resourceful than you, and yet it perseveres until it has transformed into a magnificent creation. Always, there is always hope for anyone who has the courage to accept it.

-- Ralph Marston



SNAPDRAGON ALLEY

Kim or Barb 219-259-0906

Have you ever looked at quilts, afghans or other crafts and wished you could find one with a triangle or a rainbow or some other symbol?

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Kim and I are independent distributors of a wonderful line of all natural, herbal weight loss products, vitamins, dietary supplements, concentration aids, ect. We approached this venture with much skepticism; but much to our surprise and delight, we quickly overcame that. In the short time that we have utilized the products ourselves—we feel much more energetic and have each lost 30+ pounds. We are firm believers in the quality and efficiency of this line of products and would like to help you become a believer too! So, if you need to lose a few pounds but hate to diet, want to feel more energetic, or want to increase your ability to focus and concentrate —**CALL US —WE CAN HELP!**

Hate Crimes Bill Passes in Indiana

HB1011, a bill requiring that police report to a central repository crimes motivated by bias against a victim's race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation, or against any group with which the victim may be affiliated, passed the Indiana legislature and was signed into law on March 14, 2000, by Governor Frank O'Bannon.

The bill, which was introduced without coverage of sexual orientation or gender identity motivated bias crimes, was initially considered too controversial to pass beyond the House in this critical pre-apportionment election year.

Justice, Inc. and LGBT Fairness, working in concert with other community organizations and supported by a grass-roots campaign, lobbied successfully to achieve a bipartisan compromise on an inclusive bill.

The 2000 Hate Crimes Bill represents an important success both symbolically and practically.

Symbolically, the bill destroys the conventional wisdom that no measure containing sexual orientation could pass the Indiana legislature. The inclusive HB1011 not only passed both Democratic and Republican houses of the legislature by overwhelming margins, but sexual orientation even triumphed (by a margin of 44-6) over an attempt in the Senate to strip it out!

Whether the response is on the part of the legislature through state-wide measures or on the part of communities through education and reconciliation, the data collection required by HB1011 of all Hoosier police agencies will be the first step toward identifying, isolating, and reducing this form of crime.

Indiana had three of the ten most heinous hate crimes in the nation in 1999. How many innocent victims could be spared the vandalism, bloody assaults, even murders if we could successfully reduce the influence of hate in Hoosier society? We may soon know.

The leaders of Justice and LGBT Fairness thank the members of their own organizations and the members of the Leadership Council that coordinates gay/lesbian/bi/trans legislative efforts for our community, including Bloomington Hate Crimes Coalition, Gender Fairness Coalition, IYG, Jesus Metropolitan Community Church of Indianapolis, Log Cabin Republicans, N.O.W., Indiana NAACP, Indiana Prosecutors Association, P-FLAG of Indianapolis, Pride at Work - AFL-CIO, Rainbow Alliance, the Tri-State Alliance of Evansville, and the Up the Stairs Community Center of Fort Wayne.

We also thank all of the members of AIDServe, Stop the Hate Coalition (Fort Wayne), Central United Methodist Church of South Bend, Hammond P-FLAG, Human Rights Campaign, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, Patoka Valley HIV/AIDS CAG, Seymour P-FLAG, Shalom United Church of Christ of Lafayette, Southside Christian Church Disciples of Christ of South Bend, Vincennes University GLBT Student Group, and the many other groups and concerned citizens that mobilized to contact their legislators, and the GLBT media that serve all or part of Indiana.

The assistance and participation of all these groups in was crucial in the passage of this bill.

By Christopher Douglas & Wally Paynter Justice, Inc.
Marla Stevens LGBT Fairness Indiana

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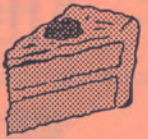
APRIL 2000

BIRTHDAYS

1, Barbara F.
 2, Viki G.
 10, Sherri H.
 12, Sharon S., Colleen L.
 19, Cheryl W.
 20, Millie L.
 21, Bridget K.
 24, Lynn C.

SPECIAL DAYS

April Fool's Day, 1
 Palm Sunday, 16
 Passover, 20
 Good Friday, 21
 Earth Day, 22
 Easter, 23
 Arbor Day, 28

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9	10 	11	12 	13	14	15
16 	17	18	19 	20 	21 	22 
23 	24 	25	26	27	28	29
30						